

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT
REGIONAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLAN AMENDMENT

PUBLIC HEARING
PGMG 2013-0001

DATE: **October 15, 2013**
MEETING DATE: **October 23, 2013**
REPORT BY: **Brian Kulina**

REQUEST:

A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan amendment request from Mogollon Engineering and Surveying, Inc., on behalf of Chason Development, to change the land use designation for approximately 4.02 acres located at 600 W University Heights Drive North from Parks and Recreation to High Density Residential.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission forward the Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan amendment to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

PRESENT LAND USE:

Undeveloped located in the Park and Recreation land use category.

PROPOSED LAND USE:

High Density Residential land use category that would accommodate the development of 11-unit, multi-family residential apartment complex.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT:

North: Interstate-40 and Woodland Village Shopping Center; Commercial Regional/Community land use designation
East: Interstate-17, Circle K, and Table Rock Apartments; Urban Open Space and High Density Residential land use designation
South: Townhomes; Urban Open Space land use designation
West: Village at University Heights Condominiums; High Density Residential land use designation

REQUIRED FINDINGS:

The Planning and Zoning Commission shall find that the proposed Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan (the "Regional Plan") amendment meets the requirements of Section 11-10.10.020 of the General Plan and Subdivision Code (City Code Title 11).

In considering the request for an amendment to the Regional Plan, the goals and policies set forth as guidelines should be weighed against the requested change. "General plans are not static documents; they recognize growth as a dynamic process, which will require revisions to the plan as circumstances, prudent, and compelling reasons warrant" (the Regional Plan, Page 1-9).

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STAFF REVIEW:

Introduction and Discussion

The Applicant, Mogollon Engineering and Surveying, Inc., is requesting a minor Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan (the "Regional Plan") amendment to ensure conformance with a proposed Zoning Map amendment for the development of a 111-unit, multi-family residential apartment complex known as "Trailside Apartments." The subject property is located at 600 W University Heights Drive North and contains approximately 4.02 acres. Vehicular access to the site is provided from University Heights Drive North. Pedestrian and bicycle access to the site is provided from University Heights Drive North and Beulah Boulevard. The subject property contains forest resources, which will be protected in accordance with the Resource Protection Standards found within Section 10-50.90 of the Zoning Code (Page 50.90-1); however, there are no slope or floodplain resources on-site.

A Zoning Map amendment request, which is directly related to this application, has been scheduled for Planning and Zoning Commission consideration immediately following final action on this application.

Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan Amendment Request

The request before the Planning and Zoning Commission is to change the land use designation for the subject property on Regional Land Use Map from Parks and Recreation category to High Density Residential category. Staff has attached excerpts from the Land Use and Growth Management Element, the Housing and Neighborhoods Element, the Transportation Element, and the Community Character and Design Element of the Regional Plan to this report.

Applicable General Plan Goals and Policies

Goal LU1 (Land Use and Growth Management)

"Greater Flagstaff will have a compact land use pattern within a well-defined boundary that shapes growth in a manner that preserves the region's natural environment, livability, and sense of community. Flagstaff will continue to offer the primary types of housing design developments that have defined its land use patterns: the conventional and traditional neighborhood scale which provide a choice of housing types and supporting non-residential uses within walking distances." (Regional Plan, Page 2-5)

Policy LU1.7 – Promote Infill Development

"If properly designed, infill development can serve an important role in achieving quality, mixed-use neighborhoods. The Regional Plan promotes infill development in the city's Urban Growth Boundary, in preference to development of outlying or more remote lands adjacent to the city. Development of infill areas in the city shall occur in a manner that is in character and context with existing, surrounding development. In some instances, sensitively designed, high quality infill development can help stabilize and revitalize existing older neighborhoods." (Regional Plan, Page 2-11)

Policy LU1.9 – Promote Quality Design

"The Regional Plan promotes quality design and development. Particular emphasis shall be placed on improved character of the public realm, including attention to streetscape design, and sensitivity to the neighborhood character and context for new development in or near existing neighborhoods. Quality design shall be an important element in successful infill development and redevelopment. In addition, plan policies have been developed which address design standards that minimize risk due to natural hazards, such as floods and wildfire." (Regional Plan, Page 2-13)

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Goal HN1 (Housing and Neighborhoods)

“The supply of affordable home ownership, rental, and special needs housing units affordable to low- and moderate-income households will be increased.” (Regional Plan, Page 2-30)

Goal T3 (Transportation)

“The region’s development pattern will support a diverse range of transportation choices, including transit, walking and bicycling, as well as driving.” (Regional Plan, Page 3-10)

Policy OSPR1.6 – Provide Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Facilities throughout the Region

“Integrate parks, opens space, and recreational facilities when suitable with other public facilities. Recreational use and regional open space land may be permitted where it is consistent with the Land Use Plan and other policies. Active and passive recreational sites shall be located throughout the region to diffuse the impact of growth and development. The location of recreational sites on the interface areas between the city and county shall be used as a means to provide recreational uses to nearby city and county residents.” (Regional Plan, Page 4-6)

Strategy OSPR1.6(c) – Acquire and Designate Lands for Parks/Recreations

“Acquire additional park/recreation lands, and/or designated City-owned lands, to accommodate growth and eliminate deficiencies.” (Regional Plan, Page 4-6)

Goal CD2 (Community Character and Design)

“The Flagstaff region will continue to protect its unique character that reflects its forested setting of ponderosa pine trees, pinon and juniper vegetation, and meadows through quality design and development. Emphasis will be placed on quality design in both the public realm – streets, civic buildings, and other public spaces – as well as the private realm – commercial buildings, work places, and housing. Preservation of vegetation and wildlife are part of the quality design and development process.” (Regional Plan, Page 5-4)

Policy Analysis

Goal LU1 and Policies LU1.7 and LU1.9, as listed above, have been partially addressed by the design and location of the proposed project, in that the property is considered an “in-fill” project, and is located within the city’s Urban Growth Boundary. The proposed development of 111-unit, multi-family residential apartment complex provides a compact land use pattern and additional housing type to an existing neighborhood. Furthermore, the subject property is located within walking distance to a range of services, including a convenience store and the Woodlands Village shopping center, and has convenient access to major transportation corridors like Interstate-17, Interstate-40, and Milton Road.

Policy LU1.9 and Goal CD2 address improvements to the character of the public realm and designing a new development to be compatible with the context of nearby neighborhoods, while maintaining a sense of connection to the region’s natural setting. This has been addressed through an enhancement to the streetscape design with the addition of median landscaping and the repair of sidewalks along University Heights Drive North. In addition, several large ponderosa pines have been preserved throughout the site to help maintain a sense of connection to the natural environment. Site design enhances the public realm by practicing “building forward” and locating the buildings adjacent to the intersection of University Heights Drive North and Beulah Boulevard and adjacent to Sinclair Wash. Perimeter parking provides a buffer along University Heights Drive North between the existing residential and the proposed development. The carriage units are located to provide additional buffering between Interstate-40 and the development. The architectural style of the buildings follows a theme found locally and within the region.

Goal HN1 seeks to increase the supply of affordable housing in the community. A Development Agreement between the City of Flagstaff (the “City”) and Chason Development has been drafted and includes an affordable rental component that

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provides for 14 percent of the residential units, 12 units total, to be set at an average of 80-percent Area Median Income for a period of 30 years.

Goal T3 is addressed through a variety of transportation choices that will be available for the residents of the project. A public transit stop for Route 4 of the Mountain Line service line is located approximately one-fifth of a mile from the intersection of University Heights Drive North and Beulah Boulevard and a stop for Route 10 of the Mountain Link service line located approximately two-fifths of a mile from the intersection of University Heights Drive North and Beulah Boulevard. A series of pedestrian paths link all areas of the project internally, while existing sidewalks and the Flagstaff Urban Trail System (FUTS) will provide external bicycle and pedestrian links to adjacent development and the regional network.

Policy OSPR1.6 and Strategy SOPR1.6(c) contemplate the acquisition of additional property to accommodate growth and eliminate park and recreation deficiencies. The current Regional Plan land use designation for the subject property is Parks and Recreation. To date, the City has made no effort to acquire this private property for conversion to a City-owned park. While the City of Flagstaff Parks and Recreation Organizational Master Plan identifies a park deficit in and around the University Heights neighborhood, conversations with the Parks Section has concluded that the subject property is not feasible for the development of a park as it does not meet the geographic location for a west side park and furthermore, the site does not meet the minimum size recommendation of 8 acres or greater, and the City has no funds currently available for the purchase of the property.

While it is not necessary to list all the possible goals, policies, or strategies of the Regional Plan, it should be apparent that there are other goals, policies and strategies that support the need for additional housing types, particularly when the neighborhood is developed with compatible and interconnected land uses, such as single-family residential, regional commercial, and the proposed apartments. This land use combination creates a mixed-use neighborhood. Development of this nature establishes a more pedestrian friendly environment and increases the sustainability of the community by providing additional travel modes and reduced vehicle trips.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICE IMPACT ANALYSIS:

Water and Sewer System, Stormwater Impacts, and Traffic Impacts

The Zoning Map amendment request requires preparation and submittal of a Water/Sewer Impact Analysis, a Drainage Impact Analysis, and a Traffic Impact Analysis. Review of those analyses have determined that the subject property has adequate water supply and pressure, existing sewer capacity to meet the needs of the development, and fully improved street facilities. Additional information regarding the impacts of development on the City's infrastructure system can be found in the accompanying Zoning Map amendment staff report.

Parks, Schools, and Fire Protection

The closest existing City-owned park to the subject property is Bow and Arrow Park located approximately three-fifths of a mile away. In order to offset the impact of additional residents on the current park system, it has been recommended, with the concurrence of the Parks Section and the agreement of the Developer, that the proposed development include a playground structure, in addition to any amenities provided within the clubhouse, that are designed to meet the needs of children ages 5 to 12.

The subject property is located within the Flagstaff High School, Mount Elden Middle School, and DeMiguel Elementary School attendance boundaries.

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The closest City Fire Station to the subject property is Fire Station 6-S Lake Mary Road, which, according to the Fire Department, is located approximately 1.1-miles away within the desired four-minute response time.

Other Requirements

Included as an attachment to the Zoning Map amendment staff report is: a Site Plan; Elevations, Building Plans, and Unit Plans; a Preliminary Landscape Plan; a Resource Protection Plan; a Preliminary Water and Sewer Plan; a Preliminary Grading and Drainage Plan; and an Electrical Site Plan.

Public Input

Public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council are conducted in conjunction with the Zoning Map amendment request. In accordance with Arizona Revised Statute and Section 10-20.30.080 (Page 20.30-9) of the Zoning Code, notice of public hearing was provided by placing an ad in the Daily Sun, posting notices on the property, and mailing a notice to all property owners within 300-feet of the site.

In accordance with Section 10-20.30.060 of the Zoning Code (Page 20.30-5), a Citizen Participation Plan was prepared and implemented prior to the scheduling of the public hearings and a copy of the Citizen Participation Report is attached to this report for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council.

As of this writing, staff has received one letter, a copy of which is attached to this report, from the Sinclair Springs Townhomes Owners Association, on behalf of the owners of the forty townhomes immediately south of the subject property. The concerns expressed in the letter were parking and building height, as it pertained to maintaining the views of the mountains.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff believes that the proposed amendment to the High Density Residential land use category is supportable under the guidelines of the Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan, and would recommend approval.

Attachments:

- Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan Amendment Application
- Executive Summary for General Plan Amendment Application
- Narrative for General Plan Amendment Application
- Citizen Participation Plan and Report
- Citizen Comment Letter
- Public Hearing Legal Advertisements
- Regional Plan Elements